

Community Map Puzzle

LEVEL: High beginner to advanced

TIME REQUIRED: 20–30 minutes

BACKGROUND: This puzzle is a fun, collaborative way to practice prepositions of location and vocabulary related to places in the community. Students will work in teams to determine the locations of various places around a map as an energizing review or warm-up activity. This brainteaser can be adapted according to students' level and by access to materials.

MATERIALS: One puzzle handout per team; scissors to cut out place names. Alternatively, the puzzle map, clues, and locations can be shown on a blackboard, white board, or blank paper; in that case, students will need paper and pens or pencils. (A medium-difficulty puzzle is also provided, on page 46, if you feel the main puzzle will be too challenging for your students.)

PROCEDURE:

1. Start students off with a mini-puzzle. Instruct students to take four very small pieces of paper (perhaps cut or torn out of their notebooks) and label them as *hospital*, *park*, *library*, and *bank*.

On the board, draw four rectangles and write three clues. If you want, you can ask students to copy these in their notebooks.



The bank is to the right of the park.

The library is between the bank and the hospital.

The park is next to the bank.

Tell students to use these clues to put the bank, park, library, and hospital in their correct rectangles.

Answer:



Allow several minutes for students to work through this mini-puzzle on their own. When everyone is finished or after five minutes have passed, go through the reasoning process for arriving at the correct answer with the whole class. Ask volunteers to logically address questions such as these:

- Is it possible for the library to be on the end? (Answer: No, because it is between two other places.)
- Is it possible for the bank to be at the far-right side? (Answer: No, because it has to be next to both the library and the park.)

To further illustrate how to visualize this process, you might want to put the places in the incorrect order and go through the clues, stopping when there is a problem and going back and trying again.

2. If necessary, review the meanings of the main puzzle's community locations (*bakery*, *florist*, *shopping mall*, *movie theater*,

This puzzle is a fun, collaborative way to practice prepositions of location and vocabulary related to places in the community.

pet store, swimming pool, hardware store, grocery store, high school, bank, restaurant, library, police station, parking lot, post office) and prepositions of location (*across the street from, between, on the corner of, next to, on* [name of the street]).

3. Divide the class into teams of two to four students.
4. Tell students that their team will complete a map that has many blank spaces. They will work together to fill in the spaces with their correct community locations. There is only one correct arrangement. Thirteen clues will guide them to the correct arrangement.
 - If students will receive a handout and scissors, tell them that they will cut out 14 locations to move around the map as they go through the clues.
 - If students will not receive a handout, tell them that they will write 14 community locations on scraps of paper, draw the map, and view the 13 clues on the board.

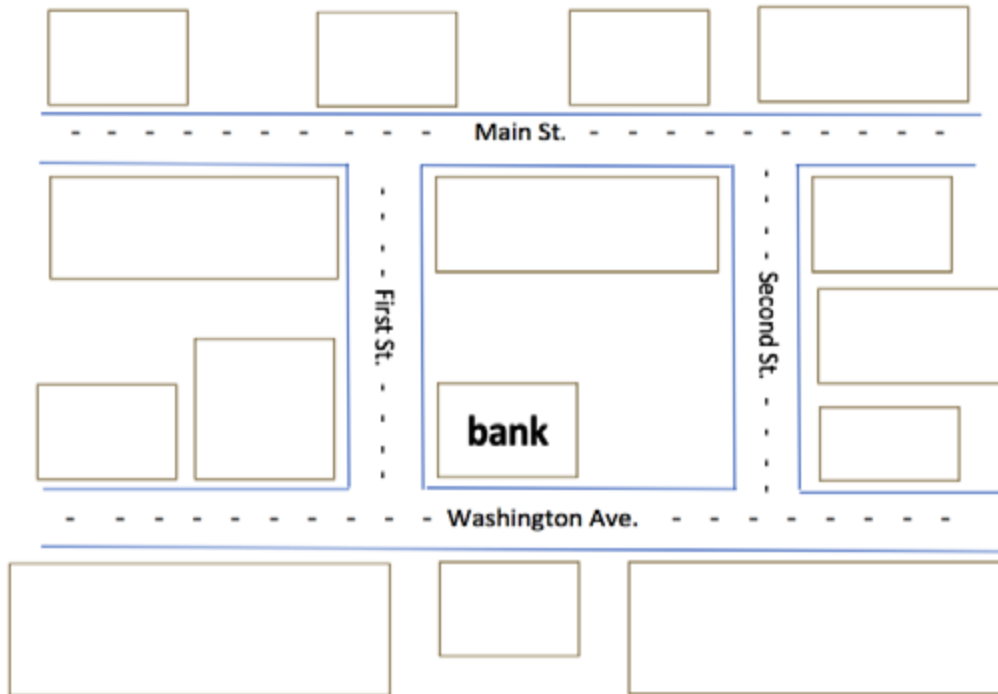
Let students know that they will not be using any tape or glue. That is because they will have to shift the pieces of paper around often before arriving at the correct arrangement. Tell them that they can clear the map and start over if they need to.
5. Before students receive their supplies, ask a few comprehension-check questions, such as these:
 - How many clues will you receive? (Answer: 13.)
 - Are you going to use glue or tape? (Answer: No.)
 - What can you do if you see that your map is all wrong? (Answer: Start over.)
6. Pass out the handouts (see page 45) and scissors to students (or draw the map on the board and instruct each team to make a copy and write the 14 community locations on pieces of paper). Students use the clues (provided on the worksheet or written on the board) to correctly place each community location. Walk around the room, encouraging teamwork and logical thinking. If you notice that a team is becoming frustrated or falling far behind, you can provide them with the answer to one of the spaces so that they can move forward.
7. When everyone is finished or time is up, have teams get together to compare their solutions and discuss any differences between them.
8. Invite the teams to view the map's solution (see page 48). After they have time to check their answers and discuss discrepancies, students can ask about any answers they don't understand.

VARIATIONS

You can adapt this activity based on the level of the students.

- Lower-level students or those unfamiliar with these types of puzzles might need to have more than one initial clue provided on the map when they begin (the location of the bank is already given in the puzzle).

Puzzle Handout



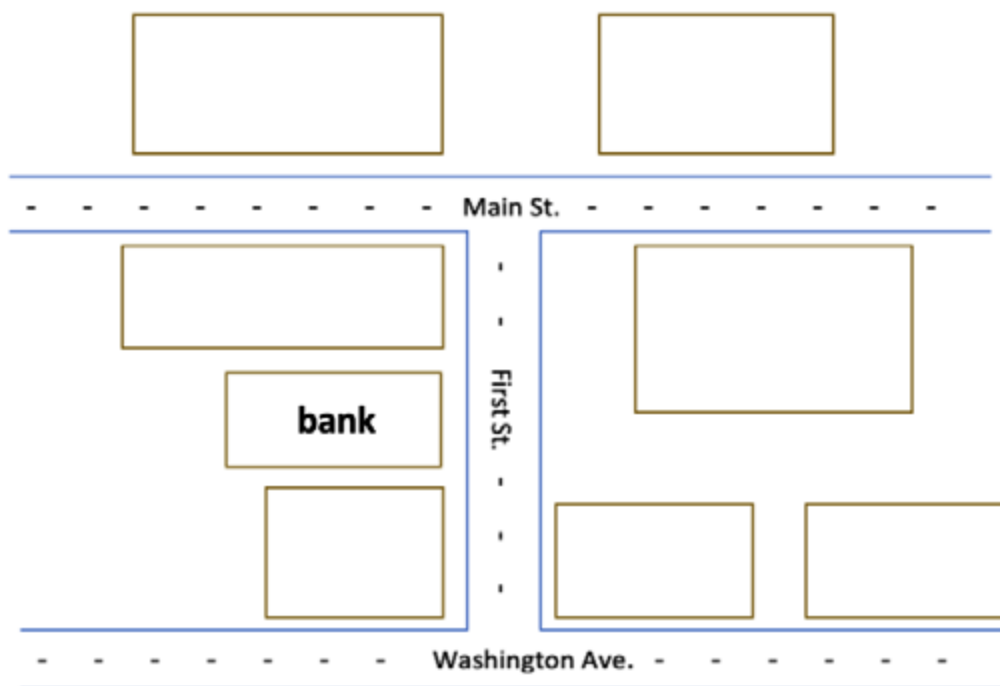
CLUES

- The movie theater is across the street from the bank.
- The library is between the restaurant and the police station.
- The movie theater is on the corner of First St. and Washington Ave.
- The pet store is next to the movie theater.
- The parking lot is on Washington Ave.
- The post office is between the parking lot and the swimming pool.
- The restaurant is on the corner of Main St. and Second St.
- The high school is across the street from the restaurant.
- The grocery store is next to the hardware store.
- The florist is between the hardware store and the bakery.
- The swimming pool is across the street from the movie theater.
- The shopping mall is across the street from the bakery.
- The police station is on the corner of Washington Ave. and Second St.

movie theater	restaurant	library	parking lot	pet store
police station	post office	florist	high school	grocery store
hardware store	swimming pool	bakery	shopping mall	

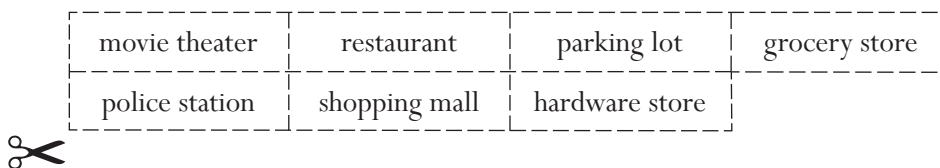


Extra Puzzle



CLUES

1. The bank is between the grocery store and the police station.
2. The police station is across the street from the restaurant.
3. The hardware store is next to the movie theater.
4. The restaurant is on the corner of First St. and Washington Ave.
5. The movie theater is on Main St.
6. The parking lot is next to the restaurant.
7. The shopping mall is across the street from the movie theater.



Before you use the activity in class, consider your students' language abilities as well as their experience with similar logic problems.

- Advanced students might enjoy a timed competition to see which team can complete the map correctly first.
- If you feel the puzzle is too challenging for your students, you can have them try the Extra Puzzle on page 46. This mid-level puzzle is more difficult than the warm-up but includes fewer locations and clues than the main puzzle. The Extra Puzzle can serve as a substitute for the main puzzle, or you can have your students complete the Extra Puzzle before trying to solve the main puzzle.
- Additionally, you can expand this activity by having teams create their own puzzles and clues for their classmates to complete.
 - o The simplest way to do this would be for students to replace the location names with others (e.g., change all mentions of *library* to *barber*), but otherwise keep the map and clues the same.
 - o To add an extra layer of difficulty, teams can draw their own maps and write their own clues. For a first attempt, they should start with something small, such as one street or just two streets intersecting, and fewer than ten community locations.

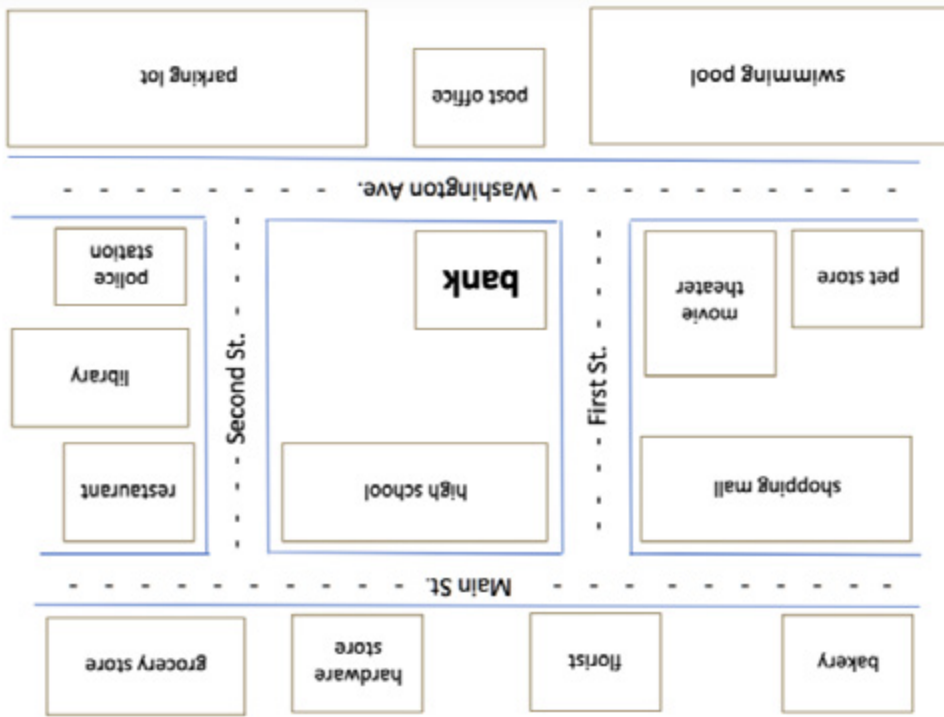
puzzle might be). If you feel that solving the puzzle may be frustrating with only one initial clue, provide a second (or even a third) to start. As students complete this hands-on activity, they are utilizing English, working together, exercising the brain, and having fun!

This activity was written by **Christine Esche**, who teaches ESL in Wisconsin at the Waukesha County Technical College. She was an English Language Fellow in Panama and has given workshops in Mexico and Turkey. She received her MA in linguistics with TESOL concentration from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

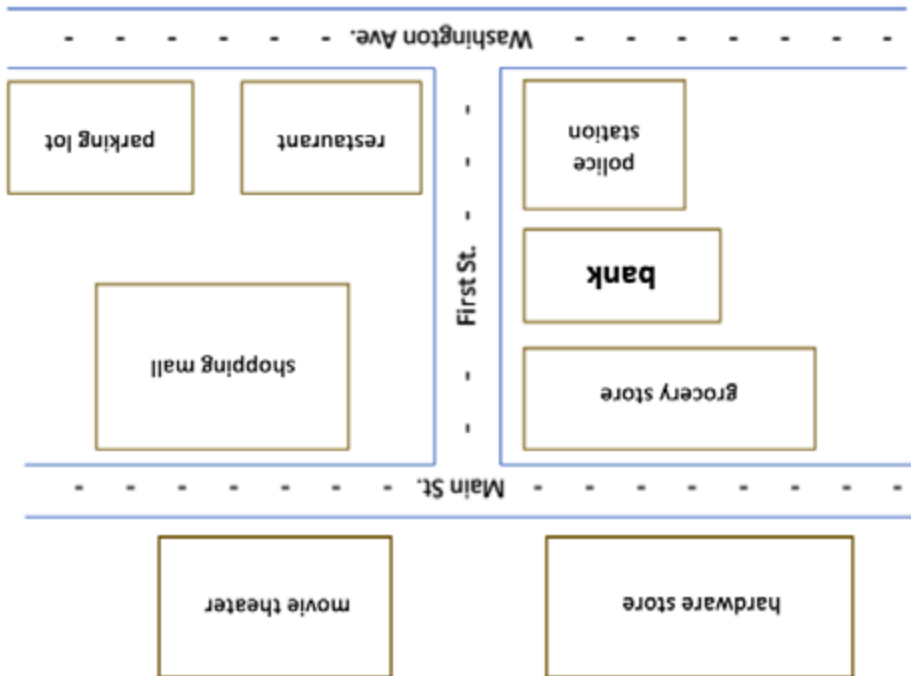
Maps created by Christine Esche

CONCLUSION

This can be a challenging activity; it incorporates not only language, but also teamwork, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. Before you use the activity in class, consider your students' language abilities as well as their experience with similar logic problems (the mini-puzzle warm-up can be a good indicator of how challenging the main



Puzzle Handout Answer



Extra Puzzle Answer